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Kidnap victim was Beirut chief of CIA, Post says

Report says Buckley was terrorism expert

WASHINGTON (AP) — William Buckley, one of the Americans kidnapped in Lebanon, was the chief of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's Beirut operations at the time of his capture in 1984, according to a published report.

The CIA tried for a year to find Mr. Buckley, and his reported death after torture led President Reagan in 1985 to order intensified efforts to find and free the American hostages. *The Washington Post* reported yesterday.

The newspaper, quoting knowledgeable U.S. government sources, said Mr. Buckley, 58, was one of the agency's leading experts on terrorism whose capture prompted the CIA to spend a "small fortune" on informants, satellite photographs and other measures in hopes of finding him and the other American hostages.

After torture and a long period of medical neglect, Mr. Buckley died in Beirut, apparently in June 1985, the newspaper said, although his death has not been officially confirmed.

Islamic Jihad, the group that claimed responsibility for Mr. Buckley's kidnapping, said in 1985 that he had been "executed" after confessing to working for the CIA.

On March 16, 1984, Mr. Buckley was seized on a Beirut street, the first of what would become a string of kidnappings.

None of the other U.S. hostages has any direct or indirect connections to the CIA, the newspaper said.

The Post said the search for Mr. Buckley became a crusade for the CIA and a preoccupation of Director William J. Casey. Agency officials never felt confident that a rescue mission would succeed, and finally they obtained what *The Post* said was "irrefutable" evidence that Mr. Buckley broke down after torture and disclosed information about CIA operations.

Mr. Buckley was assigned to Lebanon in 1983 to help the Lebanese develop methods for thwarting terrorism and to rebuild the U.S. intelligence presence after the bombing of the U.S. Embassy, in which 17 people died, including several CIA officers.